



በኢትዮጵያ ፌዴራላዊ ዲሞክራሲያዊ ሪፐብሊክ
የጠቅላይ ሚኒስትር ጽሕፈት ቤት
Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia
OFFICE OF THE PRIME MINISTER

Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed’s Summary of Responses to Questions Raised by House of People’s Representatives

Abiy Ahmed, Prime Minister of the Democratic Republic of Ethiopia responded to questions put to him by Members of House of People’s Representatives on current issues and the policy direction of the government. Here are key highlights of his responses.

Concerning peace and security—Presently we are facing challenges in ensuring institutional integrity and governmental authority due to previous regime of state capture. Opting for the politics of intrigue and conspiracy will incur significant societal costs. It is essential for us to know and defend against such challenges until we establish robust institutions. While we must invest significant effort to do this, we must be confident that we shall overcome the trials and tribulations we are facing. The Federal Government will play its intervention role in the regions as mandated by the Constitution. But its principal duty is to ensure national sovereignty. In this regard, we have faced external and domestic challenges. There are instances in which we have neutralized potentially deadly threats through the vigilance of our security forces.

Concerning religious institution and universities— In our country, it is not customary for churches and mosques to seek or be provided police protection. Even during war time, it is shameful to attack faith institutions. In stadiums, hooliganism is not expected. It is a crying shame that students should be engaged in killing each other even in the presence of police protection. This is a shameful practice. Such atrocities should not happen to any human being by virtue of one’s humanity. Fratricidal violence is disgraceful. But that is what we are witnessing today.

Concerning abduction of students – No organization has claimed responsibility for the abduction of the students. As we conducted our investigation, we have discovered some of the individuals reportedly abducted are not students. It is inappropriate to claim there are those who are abducted or hidden without evidence. However, there are report suggesting any students who have been killed or otherwise harmed. Where there is no one openly claiming responsibility for the abduction, it is necessary to undertake a sweep-up investigation. All of us suffer because of this shameful act. We should be careful not to plunge our citizens into confusion and turmoil by irresponsible and reckless talk. If the abductors are stray groups, we must give priority to saving the lives.

We must be careful not to engage in a bloodbath to resolve the issue. To abduct a person because of one's background does not apply to students because they have no identity for which they can be persecuted.

Concerning events in Wellega and Guji – In various areas in Wellega, government and residents have sustained damages rendered by armed groups. In Western Wellega, there are many tasks that need to be accomplished. But the best approach is to resolve conflict peacefully and through discussions. However, it is impossible to have two armed forces and two governments in the same country. Especially in a country that is striving to become democratic. In the Wellega region, the effort is to weaken government. There are conflicting messages. On the one hand, the complaint is the government has not been able to uphold the rule of law. On the other hand, the complaint is for government forces to leave the area. This are contradictory messages. One cannot be victorious following outmoded ideas in a country that has changed. It is necessary to appreciate the difference between freedom and lack of it. To maintain silence where the law is being flouted has no value. Protecting criminals is inappropriate.

Concerning transfer of government development institutions—Over the past 20 years, 287 government institutions have been transferred to the private sector with revenue to the government in the amount of 49.2 billion birr. There is no issue that arises because of the current political change. In the aftermath of the change that is underway, there has been no transfer of assets to the private sector. Because the previous transfers had been plagued by cronyism and nepotism, we are now strengthening structures to avoid a repeat of that. Because we had a significant debt burden with institutions like EthioTelecom and because we could not get additional loans, new capital and knowledge, it was necessary to formulate new policies. Because we believe we can achieve development, we have taken successful steps to extend our loan repayment period.

Concerning support for the domestic private sector—In the finance sector, before the change, it was compulsory to purchase 27 percent bond. There was no interest payment on this. By discarding this policy, we have managed to reduce loan and interest rates. When private banks are facing liquidity problems, we have released 14.5 billion birr to ease their situation. This is a substantial contribution. There are 12 new banks currently in the works. We will not open the banking sector to foreign investors until domestic banks are sufficiently strengthened. We will proceed by following best practices. In this manner, we are supporting the domestic private sector.

Proliferation of Political Parties—Parties are presenters of ideas. Prosperity Party aims to be an example and is a gathering of various parties. But if the aim of competitive parties is simply to oppose, it will not be productive. Talking and doing are two different things. It is necessary to learn from experience. It is through offering alternatives that one can lead a country. There should be no confusion about the ruling Prosperity Party. Because it has a majority in the House, it is the government.

Offshore Hidden Wealth—It is necessary to answer the question of whether wealth hidden in offshore accounts could be returned. We have to consider the issue as presented by the Attorney General. Some countries have agreed to help even though it may adversely affect their banks.

A commission has been established. Even though it is easy to identify where the wealth is, it is not easy to bring back the money. We will follow up on any evidence provided to us in this regard.

Creating Jobs for youth – Over the past 6 months, 1.2 million jobs have been created. We expect to get 1.5 million youths working. The job creation commission is working on this. Given our level of poverty, much is expected of us in creating jobs. But it cannot be reasonably said we will provide jobs for every youth in just a few years.

Pastoralist development – Much has been done in developing power and irrigation services. Through the offices of the Peace Minister and Deputy Prime Minister, a lot of work has been done. These efforts shall contribute to improved lives for many. Over 20 thousand hectares of land have been developed in the Afar, Somali and Shinle areas. The Peace Ministry has secured USD 450 million and is working to enhance capacity building. There are policies that will be in effect in the foreseeable future in this regard.

//